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James Agee

of life. 2. The time of life when a person becomes qualified to assume certain civil and personal rights and responsibilities; legal age: *under age*; *of age*. 3. One of the stages of life: *at an awkward age*. 4. The state of being old; old age: *hair white with age*. 5. Often *Age*. a. A period in the history of humankind marked by a distinctive characteristic or person: *the computer age*. b. A period in the history of the earth, usually shorter than an epoch: *the Ice Age*. 6. a. The period of history during which a person lives: *a product of his age*. b. A generation: *ages yet unborn*. 7. *ages*. Informal. An extended period of time: *left ages ago*. — *v.* aged, *ag·ing*, *ag·es*. — *tr.* 1. To cause to become old. 2. To cause to mature or ripen under controlled conditions: *aging wine*. — *intr.* 1. To become old. 2. To manifest traits associated with old age. 3. To develop a certain quality of ripeness; become mature: *cheese aging at room temperature*. See *Syns* at *mature*. [ME < OFr. *age* < VLat. *\*etaticum* < Lat. *aetās*, *aetāt-*, age. See *alw-*.] — *ag·er n.*

— *age suff.* 1. Collection; mass: *sewerage*. 2. Relationship; connection: *parentage*. 3. Condition; state: *vagabondage*. 4. a. An action: *blockage*. b. Result of an action: *breakage*. 5. Residence or place of: *vicarage*. 6. Charge or fee: *carriage*. [ME < OFr. < VLat. *\*aticum*, abstract n. suff. < Lat. *-aticum*, n. and adj. suff.]

**ag·ed** (ā'jēd) *adj.* 1. Being of advanced age; old. 2. Characteristic of old age. 3. (ājēd). Having reached the age of: *aged three*. 4. (ājēd). Brought to a desired ripeness or maturity: *aged cheese*. 5. *Geol.* Approaching the base level of erosion. — *n.* Elderly people considered as a group. — *ag·ed·ly adv.* — *ag·ed·ness n.*

**A·gee** (ā'jē), James. 1909–55. Amer. writer noted esp. for his novel *A Death in the Family* (1958).

**age group n.** All the people of a particular age or range of ages.

**age·ing** (ā'jēng) *n.* Chiefly British. Var. of *aging*.

**age·ism** also **ag·ism** (ā'jēz·əm) *n.* Discrimination based on age. — *age·ist adj.* & *n.*

**age·less** (ā'jēlis) *adj.* 1. Seeming never to grow old. 2. Existing forever; eternal. — *age·less·ly adv.* — *age·less·ness n.*

**Ag·e·nais** (ā'zhā·nā') or **Ag·e·nois** (nōwā'). A historical region of SW France.

**ag·en·cy** (ā'jēn·sē) *n., pl. -cies*. 1. The condition of being in action; operation. 2. The means or mode of acting; instrumentality. 3. A business or service authorized to act for others: *an employment agency*. 4. An administrative division of a government or an international body. [Med.Lat. *agentia* < Lat. *agens*, *agent-*, pr.part. of *agere*, to do. See *ag-*.]

**agency shop n.** An establishment in which a union represents all employees regardless of union membership but requires that nonmembers pay union dues or fees.

**ag·en·da** (ā'jēn·dā) *n., pl. -das*. A list or program of things to be done or considered. [Lat., pl. of *agendum*, *agendum*. See *agendum*.]

**Usage Note:** In Modern English a phrase such as *item on the agenda* expresses the sense of the Latin singular form *agendum*, and the plural form *agenda* is used as a singular noun to denote the set or list of such items, as in *The agenda for the meeting has not yet been set*. If a plural of *agenda* is required, the form should be *agendas*.

**ag·en·dum** (ā'jēn·dəm) *n., pl. -da* (dā) also **-dums**. Something to be done, esp. an item on a program or list. [Lat., neut. gerundive of *agere*, to do. See *ag-*.]

**ag·en·e·sis** (ā'jēn·ē·sis) *n.* Absence or incomplete development of an organ or body part.

**ag·ent** (ā'jēnt) *n.* 1. One that acts or has the power or authority to act. 2. One empowered to act for or represent another: *an insurance agent*. 3. A means by which something is done or caused; an instrument. 4. A force or substance that causes a change: *a chemical agent*. 5. A representative or official of a government: *an FBI agent*. 6. A spy. [ME < Lat. *agens*, *agent-*, pr.part. of *agere*, to do. See *ag-*.]

**ag·en·tial** (ā'jēn·shāl) *adj.* Of, relating to, or acting as an agent or agency.

**Ag·ent Orange** (ā'jēnt) *n.* A herbicide containing trace amounts of the toxic contaminant dioxin that was used in the Vietnam War to defoliate areas of forest. [From the orange identifying strip on drums in which it was stored.]

**ag·ent pro·vo·ca·teur** (ā·zhān' prō·vō'kā·tœr') *n., pl. -agents* (ā·zhān' prō·vō'kā·tœr'). A person employed to incite suspected persons to commit acts that will make them liable to punishment. [Fr.: *agent*, agent + *provocateur*, instigator.]

**age of consent n.** Law. The age at which a person is legally considered competent to give consent, as to sexual intercourse.

**age of reason n.** 1. An era in which rationalism prevails, esp. the period of the Enlightenment in England, France, and the United States. 2. An age at which a person is considered capable of making reasoned judgments.

**age·old** (āj'ōld') *adj.* Very old or of long standing.

**ag·e·a·tum** (āj'ē·rā'təm) *n.* 1. Any of various New World plants of the genus *Ageratum* in the composite family, esp. *A.oustonianum*, having showy, colorful flower heads. 2. Any

of several other plants having flower clusters similar to the *ageratum*. [NLat. *Ageratum*, genus name < Gk. *ageratos*, ageless: *a-*, without; see *a-* + *geras*, old age; see *gera-*.]

**A·ges·i·la·us II** (ā·jēs'ī·lā'əs). 444?–360? B.C. Spartan king (399?–360?) who defended Sparta during the Corinthian War (394–387).

**ag·gle<sup>1</sup>** (ā'gē) *n.* Games. A playing marble. [AG(ATE) + -IE.]

**ag·gle<sup>2</sup>** (ā'gē) *n.* Informal. 1. An agricultural school or college. 2. A student enrolled at such a school or college. [AG(CULTURAL) + -IE.]

**ag·gior·na·men·to** (ā·jōr'nā·mēn'tō) *n., pl. -tos*. The process of bringing an institution or organization up to date; modernization. [Ital. < *aggiornare*, to update: *a-*, to (< Lat. *ad-*; see *ad-*) + *giorno*, day (< Lat. *diurnus*, daily; see *DIURNAL*).]

**ag·glom·er·ate** (ā·glōm'ə·rāt') *tr. & intr.v. -at·ed, -at·ing, -ates*. To form or collect into a rounded mass. — *adj.* (ā·glōm'ə·rāt') 1. A confused or jumbled mass; a heap. 2. A volcanic rock consisting of rounded and angular fragments fused together. [Lat. *agglomerare*, *agglomerāt-*, to mass together: *ad-*, to + *glomerare*, to form into a ball (< *glomus*, ball).] — *ag·glom·er·a·tive* (ā·rā'tīv, ā·glōm'ə·rāt'iv) *adj.* — *ag·glom·er·a·tor n.*

**ag·glom·er·a·tion** (ā·glōm'ə·rā'shən) *n.* 1. The act or process of gathering into a mass. 2. A confused or jumbled mass.

**ag·glu·ti·nate** (ā·glōt'n·āt') *v. -nat·ed, -nat·ing, -nates, -tr.* 1. To cause to adhere, as with glue. 2. *Ling.* To form (words) by combining words or words and word elements. 3. *Physiol.* To cause (red blood cells or bacteria) to clump together. — *intr.* 1. To join together into a group or mass. 2. *Ling.* To form words by agglutination. 3. *Physiol.* To clump together; undergo agglutination. — *n.* See *agglutination* 2. [Lat. *agglutināre*, *agglutināt-*: *ad-*, to + *glutināre*, to glue (< *gluten*, glue).] — *ag·glu·ti·nant adj.* & *n.*

**ag·glu·ti·na·tion** (ā·glōt'n·ā'shən) *n.* 1. The act or process of agglutinating; adhesion of distinct parts. 2. A clumped mass of material formed by agglutination. 3. *Ling.* The formation of words from morphemes that retain their original forms and meanings with little change during the combination process. 4. The clumping together of red blood cells or bacteria, usu. in response to a particular antibody.

**ag·glu·ti·na·tive** (ā·glōt'n·ā'tīv, ā·glōt'n·ā'tiv) *adj.* 1. Tending toward, concerning, or characteristic of agglutination. 2. *Ling.* Of, relating to, or being a language in which words are formed primarily by means of agglutination.

**ag·glu·ti·nin** (ā·glōt'n·in) *n.* *Physiol.* A substance, such as an antibody, that causes agglutination. [AGGLUTIN(ATION) + -IN.]

**ag·glu·tin·o·gen** (ā'glōt·in'ə·jēn, ā·glōt'n·n) *n.* *Physiol.* An antigen that stimulates the production of a particular agglutinin, such as an antibody. [AGGLUTIN(EN) + -GEN.] — **ag·glu·tin·o·gen·ic** (ā'glōt·in'ə·jēn'ik, ā·glōt'n·n) *adj.*

**ag·grade** (ā·grād') *tr.v. -grad·ed, -grad·ing, -grades*. To fill and raise the level of (the bed of a stream) by deposition of sediment. — **ag·gra·da·tion** (ā'grā·dā'shən) *n.* — **ag·gra·da·tion·al adj.**

**ag·gran·dize** (ā·grān'diz', ā'grān') *tr.v. -dized, -diz·ing, -diz·es*. 1. To increase the scope of; extend. 2. To make greater in power, influence, stature, or reputation. 3. To make appear greater; exaggerate: *aggrandize an argument*. [Fr. *agrandir*, *agrandiss-* < OFr.: *a-*, to (< Lat. *ad-*; see *ad-*) + *grandir*, to grow larger (< Lat. *grandire* < *grandis*, large).] — **ag·gran·dize·ment** (ā·grān'diz·mənt, -diz'z) *n.* — **ag·gran·diz·er n.**

**ag·gra·vate** (ā'grā·vāt') *tr.v. -vat·ed, -vat·ing, -vates*. 1. To make worse or more troublesome. 2. To rouse to exasperation or anger; provoke. [Lat. *aggravare*, *aggravāt-*: *ad-*, to + *gravare*, to burden (< *gravis*, heavy; see *g<sup>1</sup>era-*).] — **ag·gra·vat·ing·ly adv.** — **ag·gra·va·tive adj.** — **ag·gra·va·tor n.**

**Usage Note:** It is sometimes claimed that *aggravate* should be used only to mean "to make worse" and not "to irritate." But the latter use dates back as far as the 17th century and is accepted by 67 percent of the Usage Panel. As H.W. Fowler wrote, "the extension from aggravating a person's temper to aggravating the person himself is slight and natural."

**ag·gra·vat·ed assault** (ā'grā·vāt'id) *n.* Law. An assault that is more serious than a common assault, esp. one performed with an intent to commit a crime.

**ag·gra·va·tion** (ā'grā·vā'shən) *n.* 1. The act of aggravating or the state of being aggravated. 2. A source of continuing, increasing irritation or trouble. 3. Exasperation.

**ag·gre·gate** (ā'grī·gēt) *adj.* 1. Constituting or amounting to a whole; total: *aggregate sales*. 2. Bot. Crowded or massed into a dense cluster. 3. Composed of a mixture of minerals separable by mechanical means. — *n.* 1. A total considered with reference to its constituent parts. 2. The mineral materials used in making concrete. — *tr.v.* (gāt') -gat·ed, -gat·ing, -gates. 1. To gather into a mass, sum, or whole. 2. To amount to; total. — *Idiom.* In the aggregate. Taken into account as a whole. [ME *aggregat* < Lat. *aggregātus*, p.part. of

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